

## EXPLORING ARABIC CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS OF MSA LEARNERS USING ACTIVITY-BASED APPROACH

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### Abstract

This study examines how certain classroom activities improved creative writing skills in Arabic of the selected Modern Standard Arabic students. It demonstrates how effectively ten classroom exercises helped twenty students in Jamal Mohamed College's I and II-year Postgraduate students of Arabic. After the activities were worked out in the classrooms, the information was gathered using qualitative questionnaires. The conclusion part shows how pertinent it was to give the chosen learners ten classroom activities to help them become better writers. This study has pedagogical and policy-level ramifications that help students to develop their writing abilities in their workplaces. According to the study, it is inferred that teachers can use activity-based methods to help students of MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) in improving their creative writing abilities in Arabic.

**Keywords:** Creative Writing Skills, Activity-Based Approach, Classroom Activities, MSA Learners, Arabic Writing Skills, Pedagogical Implications

## Introduction

Writing skills in Arabic are a necessary proficiency for MSA learners in the 21st century. It is useful for them in the future when they join workplaces. They need to spend their personal space writing Arabic creatively in their daily lives. For developing one's writing skills personally or academically, technology can be used as a significant tool that has become an inevitable part of everyone's life since the COVID-19 pandemic period all over the world. Its role in the teaching-learning process has been significant both during and after the pandemic. However, there are some socio-economic and personal issues while learning language skills in general and writing skills in particular. Writing skills are considered to be one of the most challenging skills in language acquisition. Teachers / Instructors need to give special attention to the learners when training their creative writing skills in Arabic. To motivate and train students to develop writing skills in Arabic, the implementation of creativity in writing seems to play a significant role in increasing their interest and learning outcomes. Moreover, the activity-based approach to teaching writing skills has evolved post-pandemic. The process of writing creatively in Arabic is always challenging for MSA learners. The selected learners are good at using their mother tongue to write creatively. Through their creative writings, their thoughts and ideas can be expanded. In this study, the researcher tested ten classroom activities to develop creative writing skills in Arabic for MSA learners. The effectiveness of teaching any language skills can be influenced by the innovative pedagogical strategies used by teachers and students' enthusiasm for their language learning. Every learner requires a special focus when it comes to writing skills, which is one of the difficult skills in LSRW. This study explores the possibility of developing the Arabic creative writing skills of the select MSA learners at Jamal Mohamed College.

## Review of Literature

This section deals with the work(s) already done in the related area of an activity-based approach to teaching creative writing skills in Arabic. It examines scholarly papers on the use of activity-based approaches in teaching creative writing skills in general and to MSA learners in particular.

In his paper, Ahamed Salih demonstrates how to develop short story writing skills for first-year middle school students by preparing a program based on blended learning. The research problem was defined as the weakness of short story writing skills for first-year middle school students. To verify the validity and reliability of the tools, the researcher applied the methodology to a sample group of 40 students, where the research group was divided into 20 students for the experimental group and 20 students for the control group. The research concluded with recommendations and suggestions.

In his article, Muhammad Yunus Anis elaborates on the fundamental issues: the first was the application of the WSQA method to a simple sentence (nominal sentence) in Arabic, and the second was the enhancement of writing abilities for employees and workers using the WSQA method as an effort to improve the quality of labour demands.

In the year 2000, Hassan Ahmed Muslim conducted a study to identify the effectiveness of the program proposed to develop creative writing skills while composing essays, translations, and descriptions. To achieve this objective, a creative writing test was conducted in each of the essays, translations, and descriptions. Then he developed a program in the form of training appointments and chose three experimental groups of male and female students from higher secondary first-year classes. One group studied creative writing in essays, the second group in translations, and the third group in descriptions. The study concluded that the program prepared by Hasan Ahmed Muslim was effective in developing creative writing skills in essays, translations, and descriptions. The progress of the students in essay writing was better than their translations and descriptions. The study also found that there were no differences in creative writing skills between male and female students.

Eman Muhammad Sabry conducted a study to identify the effectiveness of Arabic language teaching in an integrative structure mainly focusing on developing the skills of creative writing amongst higher secondary school students. To achieve this goal, she developed a program for integration between the arts of the Arabic language and a criterion for creative writing in two equivalent forms. Then she chose a group of second-year preparatory students, applied the creative writing test to them, and divided them into two groups, an experimental group that studied the program prepared by the researcher, and a control group that studied

using the traditional method. Then she applied the methodology for the creative writing test in its second form. The study found an improvement in the level of performance of the students in the experimental group compared to the performance of the students in the control group in terms of creative writing skills, which indicates the effectiveness of the integration of the arts and the Arabic language in developing creative writing skills.

In the year 2005, Salwa Hassan Muhammad, identified the effectiveness of educational activities accompanying the development of creative writing skills among higher secondary first-year students. To achieve this goal, a creative writing test and a program in educational activities (school library - school journalism) were built and applied to a group of higher secondary first-year students. The study found an improvement in the performance level of the students. Those who used the school press and the school library in creative writing skills had superior skills than the students who did not use them.

IsopSyafei and Aini Ummu Syukriy conducted a study to ascertain the Arabic language instructor's usage of creative board media to help students' Arabic writing skills at the Islamic senior high school of P.B. Soedirman 1 Bekasi. This study used an experimental methodology. Students from class X KBC (Kelompok Belajar Cepat - Fast Learning Group) majoring in social studies (16 students) and class X students majoring in science are the study's subjects (22 students). In this assignment project, documentation is the method of data collection. The researcher makes use of deductive analytical tools when examining the data. The findings demonstrated that: 1) the Arabic instructor made an effort to employ efficient and effective media during the learning process; 2) students might also gain from using the Creative Board media to increase their enthusiasm for practising Arabic writing. Therefore, it is understood that applying creative board media in the process of learning a foreign language is extremely possible. Students' Arabic writing abilities were enhanced by Bekasi using innovative board media.

In his research, Ghazali bin Zainuddin aimed to devise an appropriate scale for creative writing for Malaysian non-native Arabic speakers. The study created a creative writing scale made up of 23 secondary talents grouped into three main constructs: aesthetic, structural, and

cognitive. The scale items were validated by consulting a number of lecturers from Jordanian and Malaysian universities, as well as a number of experts in the Jordanian Ministry of Education in the fields of Arabic language and literature, teaching methods, and assessment, to get their opinions on the significance of these skills and their applicability to students who do not speak Arabic as a first language. The study produced a list of creative writing abilities, particularly for pupils who are not native Arabic speakers. The experts considered the majority of these abilities to be adequate, hence, it was advised that non-native Arabic speakers use them as a tool for fieldwork in Arabic creative writing. In Malaysia, Ghazali set out to create an acceptable scale for creative writing for non-native Arabic speakers.

In his article, Oday Abedan Salman Al-Jarrah aimed to identify creative writing expression skills among the students of the Department of Arabic Language at the Faculty of Education for Human Sciences, Karbala University. To achieve it, the researcher chose a sample of 150 students from the Department of Arabic Language at the Faculty of Education for Human Sciences, Karbala University. To measure the creative expression of students (the research sample), the researcher prepared a scale to measure the skills of creative written expressions, and it may be from (32) paragraphs, presented to the known psychometric characteristics. After the introduction of statistical data in the program (Microsoft Excel), the statistical pouch (Spss) reached the following results: 1-The weakness of the students of the Arabic language department (the research sample) for the skills of creative writing expression in a general perspective 2-The degree of weakness in the possession of (sample research) the skills of creative writing expression, were more students than students who have less weakness than students in creative writing expression skills. After reaching the desired results, the researcher made some recommendations. Further, some suggestions were also proposed to complement his research and extension.

The impact of creative writing exercises on students' achievements, attitudes toward writing, and motivation was studied by GökçenGöçen. A one-group pre-test-post-test experimental design was used for the investigation. The sample of this study consisted of 630 pupils from the first, second, third, and fourth grades. The "Written Production Instruction" (Türkel, 2011), "Writing Attitude Scale" (Yldz& Kaman, 2016), "The Scale of Writing Attitude"

(SusarKrmz, 2009), and “Writing Motivation Scale” (Cantezer, 2014) are the tools used to collect the study’s data. The findings demonstrated that engaging in creative writing exercises has a favourable impact on students’ creative writing accomplishments, writing attitudes, and motivation. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, there aren’t many articles in the literature that deal with the topic of developing Arabic writers through an activity-based curriculum. The MSA students of Jamal Mohamed College were used in this research since there is a research void in this area.

### Statement of Problems:

Teaching Arabic creative writing skills to non-native speakers of Arabic is always challenging. It is not easy for teachers of Arabic to teach writing skills to native speakers of Tamil. The teachers faced problems in training students for creative writing and making them write creatively in Arabic for personal purposes. The teachers have been trying different approaches to teaching Arabic writing skills and have found that most students have problems learning to write personally in Arabic and express their creative thoughts freely in Arabic. The same issue is found among the students of JMC who have no confidence and are hesitant in writing creative sentences in Arabic, and they need support through activity-based approaches. Therefore, this study proposes the implementation of classroom activities as one of the task-based approaches toward enhancing the Arabic writing skills of the selected learners at Jamal Mohamed College. In addition, this study tries to find out whether or not implementing the selected activities increases the students’ confidence and motivation to write in Arabic.

### Hypothesis:

There is an improvement in learning from the chosen students when specific classroom activities are conducted in the classrooms while teaching creative writing skills in Arabic.

### Research Questions:

This study was guided by three major research questions, which are listed below:

(i) How does implementation of classroom activities help students to develop their creative writing skills in Arabic?

(ii) How does implementation of classroom activities help students to practise creative writing skills in Arabic?

iii) How does implementation of classroom activities help students to apply creative thoughts in their daily lives?

### **Sampling:**

Twenty learners were selected for this study. They were in their second year of M.A. Arabic at Jamal Mohamed College. Twenty learners in the experimental group were trained using the activity-based approach. They were tested in two phases as mentioned in the research design. Ten classroom activities were implemented for ten days.

### **Sampling Procedure and Instructions:**

There were 20 learners in the experimental group. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study. They were briefed about the two steps they were to take in the experimental stage. Firstly, ten activities were implemented to develop their creative writing skills in Arabic, and secondly, they were given qualitative questionnaires to analyse their creative writing skills in Arabic. They were also asked to contact the teachers through emails and WhatsApp Messenger. The learners were invited to clear their doubts regarding creative writing skills through a Q&A session during the study period.

### **Data Collection Method:**

Only qualitative data were collected in this study.

#### ***Qualitative Questionnaire:***

In this section, participants' responses obtained from the questionnaires were analysed. The questions in the questionnaire that were given to the students are listed below:

1. Did you enjoy learning to write creative stories in Arabic during the (ten) classroom activities? Share your learning experience(s).
2. Were you able to write creative stories using the limited words given by teachers?
3. Were you able to create sentences and share them in a group without hesitation?

Share your learning experience(s).

4. Were you able to collaborate with your classmates on writing creative sentences in a group? Share your learning experience(s).

5. Were you able to listen to BBC Arabic and frame sentences in Arabic on your own? Share your learning experience(s).

6. Were you able to describe images in words and sentences in Arabic? Share your learning experience(s).

7. How would you share your experiences in developing your vocabulary skills in Arabic through the A- Z Vocabulary Game?

8. How would you share your experiences in improving your Arabic vocabulary after ten classroom activities? If yes, explain.

9. Did you learn how to write creative paragraphs on your own? If yes, explain.

10. Did you learn how to write creative poetry? If yes, explain.

11. Do you want to add any other comment on your learning experiences? If yes, explain.

12. Do you want to comment on the progress of your creative writing skills through ten classroom activities? If yes, explain.

### Research Tools:

Ten classroom activities were prepared to develop learners' creative writing skills in Arabic.

**Activity 1:** A to Z Story Creation

**Objective:** To develop learners' Arabic creative story-writing skills.

**Nature of Activity:** Group work (40 learners)

**Procedure:**

Students need to generate statements for developing the story coherently through A-Z



(أ-ي) mode. For example,

"He is a boy who loves cakes that are available in a cake shop, but he has no money."

"إنه هو الولد الذي يحب الكعك الموجود في متجر الكعك، لكنه ليس عنده فلوس"

### **Activity 2:** Story Creation through Ten words

**Objective:** To develop learners' creative story-telling skills with limited words.

**Nature of Activity:** Group work (8-10 learners each)

**Procedure:** The teacher needs to divide the class into four groups. Ten words are to be given to them, and they are asked to write short stories creatively in any context. Finally, consolidate all the stories.

### **Activity 3:** Sentence Creation

**Objective:** To develop learners' collaborative skills in creating and sharing sentences.

**Nature of Activity:** Group Work ( 4 - 6 learners each )

**Procedure:** Students are asked to write sentences in attendance order or alphabetical order of their names or form different shapes (triangle, rectangle, and square) in the classroom for tasks. For example, use register numbers 1 to 40 or a circle formation in the classroom for writing sentences one by one in a clockwise direction. Ten rounds are done in total.

### **Activity 4:** Group Writing

**Objective:** To develop learners' group creative writing skills with coherence and relevance.

**Nature of Activity:** Group work (4 learners each)

**Procedure:** Four groups, four each in groups A1, B1, C1, & D1. Each group should write ten statement sentences on one theme. After writing 40 statement sentences on the given theme the sentences would be shared with the group. One theme with 40 statement sentences.

### **Activity 5:** Sentence Generation through listening to BBC Arabic using All BBC Radio

## Application

**Objective:** To develop learners' sentence-generation skills.

**App:** All BBC Radio Application      

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=all.bbcradio.live>

**Nature of Activity: Pair-work**

**Procedure:** Live BBC Arabic is played and students are asked to listen to it for 30 minutes. Then, they are instructed to write 10 sentences each and consolidate 400 sentences at the end.

**Activity 6:** Describing photos

**Objective:** To develop learners' photo-describing skills in Arabic.

**Nature of Activity: Group work**

**Procedure:** Students are displayed pictorial images and instructed to describe them in words and sentences. Whatever comes to their mind regarding images, they need to describe in sentences. **Example:** "A dirty hand on the clustered hair of a girl, who is sad and wearing small rings in her ears."

"يد قذرة على الشعر العنقودي لفتاة حزينة ترتدي حلقات صغيرة في أذنيها"

**Activity 7:** A-Z (أ-ي) Vocabulary Game

**Objective:** To develop learners' vocabulary skills through an A-Z method

**Nature of Activity: Individual Task**

**Procedure:** Students are given an alphabet each and instructed to write as many words as possible. They are taught the first five alphabets one by one, then consolidate them and check their level of vocabulary in the end.

**Activity 8:** Vocabulary Development through Literature

**Objective:** To improve learners' vocabulary skills through literary texts

**Nature of Activity:** Individual Task

**Procedure:** In any class, after regular lessons are taught, students should be instructed to write words from the prescribed text(s) through ABC mode. Assign one alphabet for each student to generate words used in the classroom. This sets a platform for students to come up with more words related to the text(s), which later will help them to coordinate with their friends to make sentences of their own.

**Activity 9:** Short Creative Paragraph Writing:

**Objective:** To develop learners' short-paragraph writing skills.

**Nature of Activity:** Group work (10 learners each)

**Procedure:** Ten students are to be assigned to a group. 4 groups are to be formed and each should be given one theme. Students should be instructed to write a creative paragraph in the following way:

S1 - Topic Sentence

S2 - S9 - Supporting Sentences

S10 - Concluding Sentence

**Activity 10:** Creative Long Paragraph Writing

**Objective:** To develop learners' long-paragraph writing skills.

**Nature of Activity:** Group work (20 learners each)

**Procedure:** Two groups are to be formed. Each group should be assigned a theme and encouraged to write a long creative paragraph in the following way:

S1 - Topic Sentence

S2 - S19 - Supporting Sentences

S20 - Concluding Sentence

Later, instruct students to sit in pairs. Students should be introduced to peer-learning methodology -analyse, appreciate and comment on the creative paragraphs of their peers.

## Discussion

The responses of the twenty students were examined in this section. After completing ten exercises, they were given twelve questions to read and respond to. The study took the help of twenty students after proper invitation and instruction and the students were from various backgrounds. The average age of the participants was between 25 and 30. All twenty learners participated with a lot of enthusiasm. The qualitative questionnaires were analysed and studied carefully. The responses claimed that the ten activities were useful in assisting them to express creative thoughts and ideas in Arabic. The responses also had requests to the researchers to conduct more sessions for practice, which would enable them to write in Arabic creatively and with confidence. The ten activities were meant to be inquiry-based, and they let the students discover for themselves how well they can write in Arabic and share original ideas and thoughts with their group members and engage in thinking and writing without apprehension. Some of them actively participated and encouraged teammates to participate actively. In fact, all these details were collected during a feedback session.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to help MSA students to write more creatively in Arabic. Instructions for the ten-day activity were given to the experimental group. After participating in 10 classroom exercises spread over ten days at Jamal Mohamed College, several students showed improvement in their Arabic creative writing skills. The results of this study showed that the experiences of the selected learners with 10 activity-based techniques were significant. According to the study, MSA students could benefit from using an activity-based strategy to improve their Arabic creative writing abilities. The following 10 assignments help students to develop their creative writing skills in Arabic. These activities offer students a captivating and intriguing opportunity to practise writing in an unstructured and creative manner. The exercises motivate students to participate in discussions and activities because they are both engaging and motivating. The use of such activities increases collaboration while

simultaneously boosting healthy competition in the classroom. Even though learning styles are efficient, there are currently no studies in the literature that back up their use. Teachers should consider the following (five) suggestions:

1. According to their learners' needs, teachers might modify the activities they have chosen for implementation.
2. Before using the chosen activities to help students strengthen their writing skills, students should be inspired through warm-up exercises.
3. Students should be encouraged to communicate their thoughts and recommendations in Arabic.
4. For greater results, these exercises might be included as part of the curriculum for a semester.
5. The best outcomes can be obtained by doing these activities in a small class.

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